



# News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BLM Accelerates Land Transfers**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is picking up the pace in completing land transfers to the Alaska Native corporations, the State of Alaska, and individual Alaska Natives. State Director Henri Bisson is quick to credit the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act of 2004 for BLM's ability to accelerate title conveyance of Native allotments as well as obtain final land selection priorities that will define land ownership patterns statewide.

As part of the accelerated process, BLM proposes to amend the Alaska Native Veteran Allotment regulations to waive the requirement for a Native veteran applicant to post the corners of a claim prior to filing an application with BLM. A proposed rulemaking will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on October 7, 2005, and when final would waive the posting requirement. This change in the regulations is significant in that BLM will not reject applications solely because the applicant did not post the corners of the claim on-the-ground. Rejecting such claims on this basis is contrary to the purpose of the 1998 Alaska Native Veteran Allotment Act. The purpose of the Act was to provide a filing opportunity to qualified applicants who had originally missed the opportunity to file an allotment application under the 1906 Native Allotment Act because of military service.

BLM received the overwhelming support of many Native village and regional corporations in the implementation of Section 301 of the Acceleration Act. Native village and regional corporations have agreed to the exclusion of Native allotment parcels from corporation conveyance documents. The goal is to work with land owners to save time and money in the elimination of title recovery processes and expedite land title to individual Alaska Natives for long awaited land claims.

In fiscal year 2005, BLM patented 1,484,000 acres to Native village and regional corporations, patented 2,091,000 acres to the State of Alaska, and processed 566 Native allotment parcels.

Bisson is grateful for the conveyance tools provided by the acceleration act and the cooperation of representatives of federal agencies, the State of Alaska and ANCSA corporations in working to accelerate completion of the conveyance program.

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